

## CLAIMS

1 1. A disposable plate comprising:  
2 a substantially flat central portion;  
3 a raised rim around the substantially flat central portion;  
4 an elongated tab element that is attached to the outer edge of raised rim furthest from the  
5 substantially flat central portion, the tab element being adapted to be grasped by the fingers of a  
6 user.

1 2. A disposable plate system comprising:  
2 a plurality of disposable plates, each plate having a substantially flat central portion  
3 surrounded by a raised rim;  
4 wherein each plate has an elongated tab element that is attached to the outer edge of the  
5 raised rim furthest from the substantially flat central portion, and  
6 the tab element of a plate is adapted to be grasped by the fingers of a user and pulled to  
7 separate the last mentioned plate from the plurality of plates.

1 3. The disposable plate system of claim 2 wherein the plurality of disposable plates are  
2 assembled as a stack of disposable plates from which plates are removed from the top or bottom  
3 of the stack by grasping the tab of the disposable plate at the top of the stack and pulling upward  
4 and by grasping the tab of the disposable plate at the bottom of the stack and pulling downward.

1 4. The disposable plate system of claim 3 wherein to remove a disposable plate from the top  
2 of the stack the tab of the plate on top of the stack is grasped and pulled upward away from the  
3 stack while the tab of the next to top plate is grasped and pulled downward toward the stack.

1 5. The disposable plate system of claim 4 wherein to remove a disposable plate from the  
2 bottom of the stack the tab of the plate on the bottom of the stack is grasped and pulled  
3 downward away from the stack while the tab of the next to bottom plate is grasped and pulled  
4 upward toward the stack.  
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7 6. The disposable plate system of claim 5 wherein the tab on each disposable plate in the  
8 stack of plates is distinguished in some manner to make it easily visible with respect to the rest of  
9 the plates in the stack.

1 7. The disposable plate system of claim 5 wherein the manner in which one disposable plate  
2 in the stack is distinguished is different than the manner in which other plates in the stack are  
3 distinguished so that one disposable plate can be identified with respect to other disposable plates  
4 after they have been removed from the stack of disposable plates.

1 8. The disposable plate system of claim 2 wherein the tab on each disposable plate of the  
2 plurality of disposable plates is distinguished in some manner to make it easily visible with  
3 respect to the rest of the plurality of disposable plates.

1 9. The disposable plate system of claim 2 wherein the manner in which one disposable plate  
2 is distinguished from the remainder of the plurality of disposable plates is different than the  
3 manner in which others of the plurality of plates are distinguished so that one disposable plate  
4 can be identified with respect to other disposable plates after they have been removed from the  
5 plurality of disposable plates.

1 10. The disposable plate system of claim 9 wherein the plurality of disposable plates are  
2 assembled as a stack of disposable plates from which plates are removed from the top or bottom  
3 of the stack by grasping the tab of the disposable plate at the top of the stack and pulling upward  
4 and by grasping the tab of the disposable plate at the bottom of the stack and pulling downward.

1 11. The disposable plate system of claim 10 wherein to remove a disposable plate from the  
2 top of the stack the tab of the plate on top of the stack is grasped and pulled upward away from  
3 the stack while the tab of the next to top plate is grasped and pulled downward toward the stack.

1 12. The disposable plate system of claim 11 wherein to remove a disposable plate from the  
2 bottom of the stack the tab of the plate on the bottom of the stack is grasped and pulled  
3 downward away from the stack while the tab of the next to bottom plate is grasped and pulled  
4 upward toward the stack.

1 13. The disposable plate system of claim 2 wherein the manner in which one disposable plate  
2 is distinguished from the remainder of the plurality of disposable plates is different than the  
3 manner in which others of the plurality of plates are distinguished so that one disposable plate  
4 can be identified with respect to other disposable plates after they have been removed from the  
5 plurality of disposable plates.

1 14. The disposable plate system of claim 3 wherein the tab on each disposable plate in the  
2 stack of disposable plates is angularly offset with respect to the tab of adjacent disposable plates.

1 15. The disposable plate system of claim 10 wherein the tab on each disposable plate in the  
2 stack of disposable plates is angularly offset with respect to the tab of adjacent disposable plates.

1 16. A disposable plate system comprising:  
2 a plurality of disposable plates, each plate having a substantially flat central portion  
3 surrounded by a raised rim;  
4 wherein each plate has a cutout in the outer edge of the raised rim,  
5 the notch of a plate being adapted to assist a user separating the last mentioned plate from  
6 the other of the plurality of plates.

1 17. The disposable plate system of claim 16 wherein the cutout in the rim of each disposable  
2 plate in the stack of disposable plates is angularly offset with respect to the cutout in the rim of  
3 adjacent disposable plates.

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